

Violent morning still haunts quiet neighborhood

FBI / from 1A

the bullet-pocked living room wall. The rain took care of the rest.

But for the Knapps, the Sukerts and their neighbors, the memories are indelible: a sudden explosion of violence, then a weeklong siege of investigators, reporters and droves of strangers on a morbid sightseeing tour.

This unremarkably suburban corner in South Dade lost its innocence on Friday, April 11.

"I never thought anything like this would ever happen here. I guess if you're in the wrong place at the wrong time..." said Tommy McConnon, 18, who came home that morning from Palmetto High, ill, to find agents crouching behind his old Pacer hatchback, guns pointed across the street.

Dead men on lawn

The shooting had just ended. He saw dead and wounded men lying on his neighbor's front lawn amid the wreckage of three FBI sedans and one getaway car.

McConnon lives with his brother and his parents, Don and Diane Hauman, in a rented three-bedroom duplex across the street from the shoot-out. They moved in almost a year ago, after the Haumans returned to Miami from seven years in Saudi Arabia, where Don worked for an oil company.

"This is my old neighborhood," said Diane Hauman, 42. "I wanted to be here. All my sons' friends are here. My friends from out of town would hear the horror stories and I told them, 'I live here. It's not like that.'"

"I just thought I lived in a quiet neighborhood. I told them I lived in a nice neighborhood, really residential. Nothing ever happens. And now this."

Only a block from South Dixie Highway, Southwest 82nd Avenue is used heavily as a through-street. At lunchtime, neighbors say, students from nearby Palmetto High School race by in their cars on their way to Burger King.

The squeal of tires, the guys with no mufflers, is standard fare around here," said Robert Stebbins, who lives in one of the two identical single-family homes on the street, dramatic two-story buildings with glass roofs.

The east side of the avenue between 120th and 124th streets is otherwise taken up by 10 duplex homes, mostly rentals. Several tenants have been there less than a year. Among the residents are University of Miami law students, a chiropractor, a furniture salesman, an elderly couple and a family whose small children haven't been told what happened on the corner.

'It's very quiet'

The duplexes face the back walls of two shopping centers, a Florida Power & Light substation and a plain two-story office building. The banks the robbers hit are scant blocks away.

"It is not a very homogeneous neighborhood, not the kind of place where you shoot over to the neighbors' for a hamburger barbecue on a Saturday night," said Stebbins, 46, a financial consultant. "But in terms of the people, it's very quiet. People go to business, come home and that's it."

On a 40-foot pole in his front yard, a U.S. flag flies at half-mast in honor of the slain FBI agents. Stebbins was working on his tulips when the chase caravan came down his street. He and his girlfriend, Billie Holloway, saw the gunfight from the first to the last shot.

They have had little respite since. After being interviewed on

'What are the odds of this happening on my driveway? If you made a dollar bet on it, you'd be a millionaire several times over.'

Cory Sukert, neighbor

television and quoted in the newspaper, they were questioned by the local FBI and Metro-Dade detectives, then a group from the FBI in Washington.

"People you haven't talked to in years call you up and say, 'Hey, I saw you on TV.' I'm getting wacko calls at 1 a.m. from guys telling me not to say too much. Or the FBI says they're wackos," said Stebbins, standing in his patio. He wore a 9mm handgun strapped to his hip. He started wearing it around the house after the shoot-out.

"It's just enough to unsettle you," he said.

But he understands that there was no special reason, no conspiracy that led the cops and robbers to his block.

"Happenstance," he said, reflecting the opinion of most of his neighbors. "It could have happened anywhere, on the next block, or on 152nd Street, or west of the highway."

Constant reminder

But it didn't, said Ethel Knapp. "It happened here," she said.

"You can't go by that corner and not think of it."

Knapp and her husband, Charles, live a block away from 82nd Avenue on 122nd Street, in a row of 30-year-old homes built on one-acre lots. A few of the houses are occupied by the original owners. Several are for sale. In the past few years, young families have been moving into the neighborhood. Residents say there has been little crime.

"To me, it's a real neighborhood, an old established neighborhood," said Sue Cooper, who four months ago moved with her husband and two small children into a house one door down from the shootings.

Like virtually all her neighbors, both on 82nd Avenue and 122nd Street, Cooper said she has no intention of moving.

"I'm tempted to say maybe we made the wrong decision, but that hasn't really crossed our minds," said Cooper. "I don't feel any less safe. It was a freak happening."

'Life goes on'

But it was a freak happening that failed to even faze some

residents. Dan Minkes, a sleepy-eyed UM law student, said he was awakened by the gunfire. Once he saw what was happening, he said, "I just got back into bed." He remained indifferent days after the event.

"Nothing happens," said Minkes. "Life goes on."

The Knapps acknowledge that the shootings hit them especially hard. The killers, William Matix and Michael Lee Platt, were their gardeners.

"It's devastating," Ethel Knapp said as she sat in her living room, darkened at midafternoon. "It's hard to believe things like that exist. It's not only what they did. It's what could have happened."

"We're living in a fort. We're living in a prison. This is my home. This is everybody's home. It's scary. What's next?"

For Cory Sukert, all that remains is to have the bullet holes in his car plugged. Sukert, 21, a UM senior, was home alone when the cars crashed on his lawn and the bullets began flying through his living room. He lay on the floor in the back of the house until it was over.

"You see it, and you deal with it," he said last week. "What are the odds of this happening on my driveway? If you made a dollar bet on it, you'd be a millionaire several times over. It definitely shook me up this weekend. Now it's over."

Sukert looked at the orange lines that investigators spray-painted on his drive. They would soon be erased, but Sukert doesn't need any reminders.

"I'm not used to seeing dead bodies in the street," he said.



MARY LOU FOY / Miami Herald Staff

**Robert Stebbins, who now wears a 9mm handgun at home,
keeps flag in his front yard at half-mast.**

SECTION E

EDITORIALS

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city, and state.)
THE MIAMI HERALD
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Law enforcement demands the best in us

To The Editor:

We want protection from those bad guys, from their malice toward us and our families. We look to our law-enforcement officers for that protection. Protect us, we say — but do it by the rules. Follow our Constitution, we say, and do that dangerous work with the least possible impingement on individuals' rights. Expose yourselves to the worst instincts and most vicious impulses of the most unprincipled human beings, and do it all the time adhering to the best and highest standards of our would-be civilized society.

This would seem to be a preposterous notion, except that thousands of people — this nation's law-enforcement officers — do it every day. A handful of them were doing this hard duty last Friday morning, April 11, in Kendall when the slaughter began. What happened in the next moments brought home, in the cruelest and most vivid way, what it can mean to be a law-enforcement officer in a civilized society. It means that wicked and greedy people will try to kill you. It means that you will fight to protect yourself and your colleagues, but will take care to hurt no bystanders, holding your fire as, in fear or bewilderment, they pass. All the while, the shooting at you will continue and, at the worst, will strike home.

Even at the best, when the arrest goes peacefully and there are no tragic headlines and black strips of tape on police officers' badges, law enforcement is a hard duty. The officer must not only make his case, but also frequently must defend it and his behavior from attack in a system that tests to the maximum the strength and propriety of each proposed prosecution.

As a novice prosecutor, I used to bristle at the routine attacks of defense counsel in the courtroom on the youthfulness and integrity of law-enforcement officers. I would be even more infuriated when, out in the hallway and away from the jury, the



ALBERT COYA/Miami Herald Staff

Medics rush wounded FBI agent from scene

same defense attorney would put an arm on the agent's shoulder and say, "It's nothing personal. You guys do a great job."

The officers always viewed it with more equanimity, and even humor, than I did. Perhaps they understood better the essential paradox of their role, or just accepted it more: A society that longs for both security and liberty will never be an easy place for those committed to ensuring each, at peril of their lives.

What impels men and women to take

on such difficult jobs? The answer cannot be fully stated. It is the same answer each of us makes when contemplating the essential mystery of human altruism and goodness in an imperfect world. We can only recognize it when it happens and be grateful. These are our heroes.

CAROLINE HECK
Assistant U.S. Attorney
Miami

★ ★ ★

Give FBI the necessary firepower

To The Editor:

The horrendously one-sided score in the recent shoot-out completely mystified me until I thought of what must be proved correct: The agents were simply out-fired. Confirmation came in *The Herald's* April 13 edition's "Opposing Firepower."

That the FBI would not have semi-automatic carbines in this age of weapons is insane. A Smith and Wesson or even a Colt .45 is considered a toy in the minds of the "bad guys."

Had some U.S. legislators been among the crowd of witnesses to the worst shooting in the Bureau's history, I'm sure they would have voted differently on the McClure-Volkmer bill, which was strongly opposed by police forces across the nation. It is now a definite firing range out there.

CARL D. SMITH, JR.
North Miami



To The Editor:

How could FBI agents with revolvers take on greater firing power without sustaining major injuries and even death?

The agents who were killed and those who were wounded will be long remembered with honor and sadness as a sacrifice to an uneven, violent effort to apprehend criminals.

Let us remember that guns do kill. Our FBI agents should be equipped with greater firing power, with the public knowledge that it will be used when needed.

BERNARD FRIEDMAN
North Miami

Thoughts from Riverside Church

To The Editor:

Marc Fisher's discerning article about [FBI agents' killer] Bill Matix, (*Herald*, April 14), short-time member of Riverside Baptist Church, asks this question of the congregation: Why did one of us kill?

The answer is, Because he was not one of us. In my opinion, he came seeking a facade of respectability and a good environment for his daughter.

What better place to find them than at a well-thought-of church to make him less suspect in his nefarious activities?

The *Herald's* handling of the FBI shoot-out story in its April 13 edition was an outrage. Giving front-page space to two homicidal maniacs while placing the stories of seven decent, heroic men on the back pages is horrible.

This was a perfect opportunity to give honor and tribute to the "good guys" and to show that in this instance, at least, crime did not pay in Miami.

LOUISE D. MILLER
Miami

★ ★ ★

Isn't it ironic that the day after the National Rifle Association (NRA) celebrated its successful intimidation of Congress to pass a loosening of gun-control laws, one of the biggest shoot-outs in the history of Florida took place?

Two FBI agents killed, five wounded. In the face of the great rise in crime, our weak-kneed lawmakers — out of greed for the enormous amounts of money banded out by the NRA — allowed themselves to be duped into passing such a vile law.

Those congressmen will have to face their constituents in the coming elections.

MILTON R. JACOBS
North Miami

★ ★ ★

I am so tired of the bloodshed on our streets and of national headlines about Miami — all negative, of course. But I am even more upset over what is becoming of our city.

Day in and day out, policemen, firemen, and other people put their lives on the line, yet there is all this serious crime continuing.

Maybe we should follow the punishments used in Saudi Arabia, "an eye for an eye." There aren't many repeat offenders there.

To those two FBI men who lost their right to live and to the five who were injured, I am terribly sorry, but thank you for your devotion to the cause. For all the policemen who rushed to the scene to lend their support, thank you also. God bless you all.

To those who "have had it, it's time to leave Miami," goodbye — but I'm staying. I believe that there is a lot to be done, but I'm willing to fight for it.

MARIA CRISTINA VAMOS
Miami

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

—Remembering the slain FBI agents

To The Editor:

Two weeks have passed since two of my fellow agents died and five more were wounded. I still ask myself: Am I good enough?

More than a week has passed since my fellow agents were buried and others remain hospitalized, their families and friends grieving and traumatized. And I still ask myself: Am I good enough?

What happened to the FBI agents on April 11, 1986 on SW 82nd Avenue in Miami could have happened anywhere in our country. It could have happened to any law-enforcement agency in our country. On April 11, 1986, it did happen to agents of an organization to which I proudly belong. Years of training and experience can never fully prepare any law-enforcement officer for the unexpected nightmare, nor for the shock of sudden death. Try as we may, we are all merely human. We carry badges and guns, but we also feel every emotion felt by others. We do try to "protect and serve." Though sometimes as human beings we fail, as a whole the law-enforcement community is as dedicated and selfless as any other on this Earth. And I still ask: Am I good enough?

I ask the question because I wasn't on SW 82nd Avenue that morning. I ask the question on behalf of law-enforcement officers everywhere who were not on the scene when their partners and friends were wounded or lost their lives. I ask the question because I need to know if I could have stood in their shoes that morning in Miami and have so honored my badge.

RALPH L. MORGAN
Special Agent
FBI
Miami

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STEVE DAILY COMMENTARY
MONDAY, APRIL 14th, 1986
(SHOOTOUT)

IT'S DIFFICULT FOR MOST PEOPLE TO IMAGINE THE COURAGE
IT TAKES FOR PEOPLE LIKE THOSE FBI AGENTS TO DO WHAT
THEY DID FRIDAY MORNING.

JUST TRY TO IMAGINE IT: PERFORMING A SIMPLE LICENSE-PLATE
CHECK ALONG SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY...THEN BEING SNUFFED OUT IN A
HAIL OF GUNFIRE. BUT THE COURAGE CAME IN-BETWEEN. WHILE
THE OUTLAWS WERE CONTINUING TO FIRE RAPIDLY AT THE FBI
AGENTS...THOSE AGENTS WERE ALTERNATELY HOLDING FIRE AND
TRYING TO PROTECT INNOCENT PEOPLE DRIVING BY...AND TRYING
TO PROTECT THEMSELVES BY FIRING AT THE OUTLAWS.

IT TAKES A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF PERSON TO STAND THERE
BEING SHOT-AT, AND PARTICULARLY BEING SHOT-AT WITH
AUTOMATIC WEAPONS...AND TO HOLD YOUR FIRE WHILE SOME
UNAWARE INDIVIDUAL DRIVES OR WALKS BY. FRANKLY, IT
GOES AGAINST ALL HUMAN INSTINCTS...AND IT TAKE A GREAT
DEAL OF ATTENTION TO TRAINING TO MAKE IT WORK.

WHEN INCIDENTS OCCUR SUCH AS THAT ONE, I ALWAYS THINK
HOW GRATEFUL WE OUGHT TO BE THAT THERE ARE SUCH PEOPLE
WORKING FOR US. IT MAKES ALL THE CREEPS WHO MASQUARADE
AS COPS AND WORK FOR THE OUTLAWS ALL THE MORE LAMENTABLE
AND DISGUSTING...AND IT SHOULD MAKE THE REST OF US ALL
THE MORE PROUD THAT THERE ARE STILL YOUNG PEOPLE WILLING
TO BECOME POLICE OFFICERS, FBI AGENTS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL.

FRIDAY'S MURDERS AND WOUNDINGS OF SOME OF OUR FINEST OUGHT
TO MAKE US ALL AWARE OF THE PRIDE WE OUGHT TO HAVE AND
THE ADMIRATION WE SHOULD HOLD FOR THE REST OF THEM.

I'M STEVE DAILY, AND THAT'S MY OPINION.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

FBI Training Sets The Standard

Here are some thoughts about the Federal Bureau of Investigation as we approach Law Day.

On the day that FBI agents Jerry Dove and Benjamin Grogan were killed in a Miami shootout, about 75 graduates of the FBI academy from this area had gathered on the Palm Beach County sheriff's firing range for a day of retraining, reminiscing and fellowship.

As Palm Beach Police Chief Joseph Terlizze recalls, there were mostly local police chiefs and other ranking officers, and about a dozen FBI agents. It was the annual get-together for alumni of the bureau's prestigious training academy at Quantico, Va.



"We got the phone call at about 9:35 a.m. and we were so stunned that I saw tears," Terlizze said. "We canceled the rest of the program, of course. Law-enforcement agencies have their squabbles and jealousies, but when men go down, the public wouldn't believe the camaraderie that is felt throughout the law-enforcement community."

Everyone was stirred by that terrible shooting, which left two agents dead and five wounded. The outpouring of sympathy from all over the nation spoke volumes about the nation's regard for law-enforcement officers in general. I wondered if I didn't also suggest that the FBI has totally emerged from its dark days of the early 1970s.

Readers of a certain generation will remember when the G-Men, as they were called a few decades ago, were national heroes. In the Depression of the 1930s the country experienced a wave

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of bank robberies and killings at the hands of minor gangsters. Then an incorruptible firebrand named John Edgar Hoover took over a tarnished federal agency and whipped it into a disciplined law-enforcement team. The new FBI made headlines by tracking down John Dillinger, George "Machine Gun" Kelly and other killers.

In time the much-glorified Hoover became a victim of his own power and ego. He outgrew the control of Congress and even presidents. With his paranoia about communist subversion from within, he had his agents spy on political dissenters. After his death Congress learned that a few agents had stepped outside the law, even committed burglaries, in their zeal to gather evidence against people he perceived as enemies.

Bureau morale suffered in those days as the FBI lost public esteem. But for all of Hoover's sins, the rank-and-file agents continued to perform honestly and effectively. In 1962 they were given shared jurisdiction over drug crimes yet no one ever hints of corruption within this blue-ribbon bureau.

In order it might be added that most of the present wants the FBI would operate more openly. The bureau communicates to the public through designated spokesmen, whose job it is to think they will endanger national security if they provide more than their name, rank and serial number.

Most newsmen also would acknowledge how, even that under the new leadership of former federal judge William Webster, the FBI sets the standard for other law-enforcement agencies, federal and local. Its agents are graduates in law, accounting or other appropriate specialties, and police departments all over the country vie for scarce slots in its national academy. Partly be-

cause of the bureau's pace-setting over the years, police training at all levels has improved dramatically in just a generation.

Bill Baggs, the late editor of *The Miami News*, used to write about the incident that brought a training program to the Miami Police Department in the 1940s. As was its custom, the department one day hung a badge and a gun on a brand new applicant and assigned him to direct traffic on downtown Flagler Street.

Taking his new authority seriously, the rookie shouted at a jaywalker to return to the curb. When the pedestrian either did not hear the order or ignored it, the officer raised his new pistol and fired. Fortunately, his aim was even poorer than his IQ. The bullet went wild and lodged in the bathroom mirror of a hotel room overlooking the street. The drummer who had been shaving in front of the mirror packed up and left Miami, the officer was relieved forthwith, and the city fathers met to establish a police academy. Bill Baggs, I should concede, was familiar with the device called literary license.

Today, every urban police officer has attended a police academy. Salaries are better but they aren't great when you consider the risks an officer assumes and the increasing education requirements. Furthermore reports that more than 60 percent of his officers are college graduates and that others are doing college work.

The public has an improving regard for law-enforcement officers at all levels, partly because they are trying to cope with an increasingly lawless society but mostly because people who go into law enforcement are like people who go into teaching and a few other professions: doing it not because they want to get rich but because they believe the work is important.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Miami FBI shoot-out influences governor

AUSTIN — A shoot-out in Miami that left two FBI agents dead and five wounded inspired Gov. Mark White on Thursday to buy \$131,000 worth of semiautomatic rifles for Texas Department of Public Safety troopers.

White said a criminal justice grant will provide 435 additional

SOUTH



"Mini 14" semiautomatic rifles for officers in such high-risk units as narcotics, intelligence and motor vehicle theft. The grant also will pay for 43 body armor vests.

"Looking at the weapon power alone, it [the Miami shoot-out] was not a fair fight," he said. "This incident raised serious questions about how adequately armed our law enforcement officers are to face odds against a heavily armed assailant."

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Nebraskan says .Matix, Platt menaced him

DAN CHRISTENSEN

Miami News Reporter

Ten months before Bill Matix and Michael Platt killed two Miami FBI agents in the bloodiest gunfight in FBI history, a Nebraska man says, the pair abducted him and threatened to kill him — over a business deal.

"They were bloodcurdling characters. They terrified me," said Earle M. "Tad" Burnett II. "They told me they were going to dismember me."

U.S. postal authorities are investigating Burnett and his company, focusing on complaints that Burnett sold defective vending machines through the mail, said Art Thompson, a U.S. postal inspector in Omaha. Burnett declined comment on the probe.

Matix and Platt bought vending machines from Burnett. That purchase led to the alleged abduction and, subsequently, a lawsuit filed by Matix accusing Burnett of slander.

According to the court file of the slander suit, obtained from a county court in Lincoln, Neb., Matix and Platt purchased vending machines from Burnett in early 1985.

In an interview with The Miami News, Burnett said the 10 reconditioned cigarette, candy and soda machines cost Matix and Platt \$10,000.

"They got in touch with me after they saw an ad in USA Today," said Burnett. "I got the impression they were going to start a route. They told me they were in with the local boys down there, criminals, but I took that with a grain of salt."

Burnett, 59, owner of Frost Corp., said that shortly after Matix and Platt bought the machines they decided they no longer wanted to go into the business and shipped them back to Nebraska in damaged condition.

"They demanded to be given their money back. I didn't refund them any money, but sent them a letter telling them that when the machines were fixed up and resold that they would get some back," said Burnett.

Matix, however, contended in papers filed to support his slander suit that the vending machines were returned because they didn't work and claimed Burnett misled him about a refund.

Last June, the disagreement came to a head.

Burnett, in a counterclaim filed in the slander case, said he was leaving home for work about 7:30 a.m. June 18 when he was "accosted" by Matix, 32, and Platt, 35.



Matix

They "indicated to (Burnett) that they were armed with a hand gun and knives and that they would kill (him) unless he refunded the entire amount of the sale price to them immediately," the counterclaim says. "During this conversation William Matix and Michael Platt each kept his hand in his pocket and each made certain gestures that indicated that he had a weapon inside his pocket."

Matix's account of the incident makes no mention of the alleged abduction at Burnett's home.

Burnett, who said he later learned that the pair had watched him for two days before confronting him, said Matix and Platt used the abduction to play "a good guy-bad guy routine" with him.

"Matix appeared to be the perfect gentleman most of the time," he said. "Ninety percent of the threats came from Platt, but it was obvious they were working together."

Burnett said he stalled for time, telling Matix and Platt that he couldn't get any money until the banks opened later that morning. He said that after the pair forced him to accompany them, he suggested they go downtown for breakfast. He recommended a place he knew police were sure to be, he said.

Matix and Burnett's accounts agree on what happened next.

"While at Kuhl's Restaurant eating breakfast, (Burnett) suddenly jumped to his feet and ran to a table where several Lincoln police officers were sitting and complained in a voice that could be heard throughout the establishment that (Matix) was threatening to kill (Burnett)," states Matix's complaint.

Sgt. Adolph Hynek was one of the officers at the restaurant that day.

"It all happened so fast I thought it was a joke," Hynek said in an interview. "I remember Burnett saying, 'Help. These guys want to get me.'"

The startled police took Matix and Platt outside and searched them and their rental car for weapons. None were found and no charges were filed.

"We checked them out, but it looked like they (Matix and Platt) had a legitimate complaint," said Sgt. Richard Kohles. "No charges were filed because there was nothing to back up Burnett's statement."

Matix and Platt, furious about Burnett's story to police, began looking for a lawyer. Across the street from the restaurant they found the office of Stanley D. Cohen.

"They were angry because they had been accused," Cohen said. "They wanted to be vindicated."

Cohen agreed to take the case for \$200, court costs and 40 percent of whatever was recovered from Burnett. He filed suit Aug. 20 alleging that Matix was

"humiliated and embarrassed" by the reported death threat.

"(Matix) further alleges that the allegations made by (Burnett) were for the sole purpose of having (Matix) arrested so he could not collect the money that was rightfully his," Matix's complaint states.

The case never went to trial. Platt and the police were to have been Matix's witnesses, Cohen said.

"I never realized that there was any possibility that Platt and Matix were serious," said Cohen, who only yesterday learned that Matix and Platt had been killed in the FBI shootout in Kendall that also left five agents wounded. "I guess I entertain that possibility now."

Burnett, who had not been questioned by the FBI about his encounter with the killers, said he feels

lucky to be alive today.

"I kept wiping my eyes when I read about them in the newspaper. I just couldn't believe it," said Burnett. "I remember they called me an old man and said that because of that they could outwit me. They told me that when you get old, the brain deteriorates . . . I had never been talked to like that."

Detective Kohles said that Lincoln police were sympathetic with Matix and Platt.

Thompson, the postal inspector, said Matix and Platt never complained to the Postal Service, but Kohles said Lincoln police investigated their complaints about Burnett and turned the matter over to the FBI.

A spokesman for the FBI in Lincoln declined comment.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Dispute with slain gunmen recalled

The Associated Press

MIAMI — A dispute about vending machines 10 months before the bloodiest shoot-out in FBI history escalated to abduction and death threats, says a Nebraska man whose business deal with slain bank robbery suspects Bill Matix and Michael Platt turned sour.

"They were bloodcurdling characters," Earle M. "Tad" Burnett II told the *Miami News* in a story published Wednesday. "They told me they were going to dismember me."

The accusations prompted Matix to file a slander lawsuit against Burnett, who filed a counterclaim.

The business deal began in early 1985, when Matix and Platt bought 10 vending machines for

\$10,000 from Burnett, who is being investigated by U.S. postal authorities because of complaints that he sold defective vending machines through the mail.

Burnett, 59, said that shortly after Matix and Platt bought the machines, they shipped them back to Nebraska in damaged condition.

"They demanded to be given their money back," Burnett said. "I didn't refund them any money, but sent them a letter telling them that when the machines were fixed up and resold that they would get some back."

Burnett said that the two Miami men changed their minds about going into the vending business. But in his suit Matix claimed the machines were returned because they didn't work.

Burnett's suit claims he was leaving home for work one morning last June when he was "accosted" by Matix, 32, and Platt, 35.

They "indicated to [Burnett] that they were armed with a hand gun and knives and that they would kill [him] unless he refunded the entire amount of the sale price to them immediately," the counterclaim says. "During the conversation William Matix and Michael Platt each kept his hand in his pocket and each made certain gestures that indicated that he had a weapon inside his pocket."

"Matix appeared to be the perfect gentleman most of the time," he said. "Ninety percent of the threats came from Platt, but it was obvious they were working together."

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Riverside victim's husband died in FBI melee

By Michael J. Berens

Dispatch Police Reporter
and news reports

William R. Matix, a former Delaware, Ohio, man who police say killed two FBI agents Friday near Miami, was married to one of two technicians who were gagged, bound and stabbed to death in Riverside Hospital in 1983.

Matix, 34, and Michael Lee Platt, 32, died in a gun battle. Two FBI agents also died, and five other agents were wounded.

Matix and Platt had been linked to at least a half-dozen bank and armored car robberies in Dade County, Fla., during the last year, said law enforcement officials.

Columbus police said federal officials told them last night of the death of Matix, once considered a possible suspect in his wife's slaying.

Matix's wife, Patricia, 30, and Joyce McFadden, 33, research assistants at Riverside Hospital, were slain in a hospital laboratory Dec. 30, 1983. Columbus police have not solved the killings.

Capt. Antone Lanata said last night,

A man killed in the Miami shootout had been married to one of the hospital technicians slain in 1983.

"We looked hard at the man. We followed him around. We looked for girlfriends."

He said Matix told police he was at home watching his infant daughter, Melissa, when his wife was murdered. Lanata said Matix's story had some "human nature inconsistencies."

Other police officials said Matix's death could be a turning point in the case, but they will not be sure until they have sorted through FBI information.

Police sources said their strongest suspect is not Matix but another man who was a construction worker at the hospital. The man, never charged, was linked to the crime by circumstantial evidence, police said.

Police said the man owned a pair of

work boots that matched a bloody boot print found in the lab. A search warrant filed with Franklin County Municipal Court said the worker had talked to both women the day of the murders.

Mrs. Matix, 30, and Joyce McFadden, 33, were bound, gagged and repeatedly stabbed in the face and chest in the first-floor medical research laboratory in what police said then was an apparent robbery.

Matix and McFadden's husband, Larry, were questioned by police but were never publicly called suspects.

The women were killed with the same weapon, described by police as a knife with an inch-wide blade.

Authorities in both Florida and Columbus described Matix as religious and

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devoted to his family.

He moved to south Florida with his daughter several months after his wife was slain.

A close friend, the Rev. David Culver, said Matix remarried in Miami last May. Culver said Matix came back to Delaware about three times to visit friends and relatives.

Culver of Calvary Baptist Church, 1450 Troy Rd., said Matix was "greatly affected" by his wife's murder. He said Matix, a Columbus Technical Institute graduate in helicopter mechanics, had planned to enter the National Guard.

After the murder, Matix decided to become a partner in a landscaping business with Platt, who was a Marine Corps friend, Culver said.

Authorities called Matix and Platt unlikely killers with common backgrounds in military training, suburban

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RIVERSIDE next page



AP photo

William Matix and Melissa

RIVERSIDE

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living and personal tragedy.

Both were family men and homeowners. Both lost their wives to violent death. Platt's wife, Regina, committed suicide by shooting herself in the head with a shotgun in December 1984, investigators said.

FBI agents said it was the first time since 1979 that two FBI agents were killed in one incident and the most casualties in a single action in the agency's 79-year history.

The suspects' behavior, their use of automatic .223-caliber weapons and their fatigue clothes, similar to those worn by survivalists, suggest ties to extremist groups, yesterday's *Miami Herald* quoted an unidentified FBI agent in Washington as saying.

"They did not shoot out of fear or excitement. It was cold. It was calculated," the agent said.

"They really sound like survivalists. . . . They are very clean-cut, definitely Americans," said Metro-Dade Police Sgt. Tony Monheim.

"In the holdups, the group would be waiting for the guards and would just shoot them. They were ruthless. They were dangerous," said Al Carballosa, a Metro-Dade police spokesman.

Neither had ever been arrested, police said. A woman who rented a house from Platt told the *Herald* he was "an all-around nice person . . . an excellent landlord."

To their friends and neighbors, Matix and Platt were hard-working friends who ran a small land-

scaping business that provided them good homes and hopes for the future.

"They were just a nice family, that's why I'm really in shock," said a neighbor of Platt's who asked not to be named.

"I'm devastated," said one woman who lives in the same quiet cul-de-sac in the Hammonds subdivision where Platt lived with his wife and their four children the past year. "Their poor little kids. That's who I'm hurting for."

Matix and Platt are believed to have killed two people and shot at least two more during the armored car and bank holdups, including one holdup Jan. 10, police said. In that robbery, a Brink's messenger was shot in the stomach by a man wearing a ski mask.

Witnesses said a second man got out of the assailants' car and, standing over the bleeding courier, fired two more shots into him with an automatic rifle.

The men then lifted two duffel bags from the armored car and fled into a Kendall neighborhood. The Brink's messenger is still recovering.

The car used by the assailants was traced to Emilio Briel, 25, who was reported missing Oct. 10 after failing to return home from a trip to a quarry used for target practice, authorities said. Briel has not been found and is presumed dead.

Detectives said the two may be linked to at least two shootings at the quarry.

On March 12, a target shooter was shot four times and left in a canal at the quarry by two white

males who stole his car. Jose Collazo, 30, survived by playing dead, then crawled out of the canal and walked three miles for help. His car was used in a bank robbery three weeks later.

An unidentified skeleton was found near the quarry March 1.

Two agents wounded Friday were in serious but stable condition yesterday in Baptist Hospital, a nursing supervisor said. A third was in fair and stable condition in South Miami Hospital. Two others were treated for minor wounds.

Agents' killer was accustomed to tragedy

By Michael Berens and
Tim Doulin
Dispatch Staff Reporters

William R. Matix's life was fraught with tragedy.

Relatives and friends are wondering whether the deaths of his father, three brothers and the 1983 murder of his wife, Patricia, claimed a heavier toll than they realized.

Nobody knows why Matix, described as a soft-spoken, God-fearing man, would turn into a killer who was fatally shot Friday in a battle with FBI agents. Police said Matix killed two agents with a machine gun before he was killed.

THE REV. David Culver, a close family friend, said last night that Matix changed after his wife was murdered and he moved to Miami. Matix, who lived a modest life in Delaware, had more money than ever before, he said.

"After he left there were noticeable changes. I saw nothing of a violent reaction," said Culver.

After moving, Matix dressed in expensive clothes and abandoned his dream of becoming a helicopter pilot to instead work with an man who served with him in the Marines. That friend, Michael Lee Platt, was killed with Matix during the Miami shootout with eight FBI agents.

"I'M SHOCKED. I just can't believe he did it," Culver said. He said Matix was a talented cook and woodworker who attended church faithfully.

Matix's step-mother, Dola Matix, of Dayton, told *The Dispatch* she had not been notified that Matix had been killed. She refused to believe that her stepson had been involved in bank robberies.

"No, no, that could not be," said Mrs. Matix, 77. "If it was Bill, it must have been some kind of mistake, because Bill would not go around robbing banks.

"I know the boy too well. He may have gotten killed, but he wouldn't rob banks. There is something wrong somewhere. But

I'm sure the truth will come out, sooner or later."

MRS. MATIX said she had not been in contact with William since his father, Russell, died of cancer in a Cincinnati hospital in April 1984.

William attended his father's funeral in Franklin, Ohio, but left in a huff when he discovered that he had been left out of his father's will, Mrs. Matix said.

Mrs. Matix, who was married to Russell about 3 years, said her husband left everything to her. Russell left behind a pickup truck, the family house and some personal belongings, she said.

Hospital bills had depleted the couple's bank account, Mrs. Matix said.

"Russell didn't leave very much, but Bill really got upset when he was left out of the will," Mrs. Matix said. "I told him I didn't want to get into it now, and that we would talk about the matter later."

Mrs. Matix said she never

talked to William again.

DESPITE THE falling-out with William, Mrs. Matix has some fond memories of her stepson.

"He worked during the week and went to church on Sunday. He cared about his family. That's just the kind of boy he was," she said.

William was hit hard by the death of his wife, Mrs. Matix said.

"She was a sweet little woman, and she was his world. When she was killed, it hurt him awfully bad," Mrs. Matix said.

She said she had heard that William had moved to Florida, married and was "doing well financially."

Culver said Matix did not talk much about his marriage. He said Matix had told him it was a troubled marriage.

He said Matix returned to Delaware about three times after moving.

"Whenever he came back he wanted to know what was new in the murder," he said.

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'Creep' led to life of crime, Matix's brother says

By Michael J. Berens
Dispatch Police Reporter

William R. Matix entered a life of crime after being influenced by his best friend, Michael Lee Platt, who played on Matix's grief over his murdered wife, Matix's brother said yesterday.

"Platt was creepy. I only met him once, but it was enough," Paul Matix, 35, told *The Dispatch* yesterday during a telephone interview from Killean, Texas.

William Matix, 34, and Platt, 32, were killed Friday during a gun battle with FBI agents in

Lanata said Matix is not necessarily a prime suspect in the murder, but police are rechecking some "highly unusual things" about Matix's attitude after his wife's death.

Paul Matix said he saw his brother cry "many times" over the murder of his wife. Adding to the

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CRIME next page

Religious magazine called William R. Matix "dedicated father," Page 3 D

Miami. Two FBI agents also died, and five other agents were injured.

The FBI said Matix and Platt, whose wives both died tragic deaths, may be linked to at least a half-dozen bank and armored car robberies in Dade County, Fla., in the last year. Police have said the robbers killed two people and shot at least two more during the holdups.

Miami investigators said they may reopen the case into the 1984 death of Platt's wife, Regina, who died from a shotgun blast to the head. The shooting was ruled a suicide.

And Columbus police Capt. Antone Lanata yesterday said a "whole new door" has opened in the investigation concerning the 1983 murder of Matix's wife, Patricia, 30, and her co-worker, Joyce McFadden, 33, research assistants at Riverside Hospital. They were bound, gagged and stabbed to death in a hospital laboratory on Dec. 30, 1983. Columbus police have not solved the killings.

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grief, their father, Russell Matix, died two months later.

Paul Matix said their mother, Yvonne Emerick of New Madison, Ohio, left for Florida on Saturday to have William Matix's body brought back to Ohio for a funeral and burial.

He said he last saw his brother in September while visiting Miami.

He described his brother as a shy, clean-cut man who had respect for the law. He said William Matix, who drove a 1982 Oldsmobile 98, lived a moderate lifestyle in Miami. He dressed in shorts and knee-high socks.

"My brother is no cold killer," Paul Matix said.

Paul Matix said his brother was born to Yvonne and Russell Matix in a small crossroads town near Dayton.

The family later moved to Greenville, Ohio, where the parents eventually divorced, Paul Matix said. The brothers and their mother moved to New Madison, Ohio, just south of Greenville, where the brothers graduated from high school, he said.

After graduating, William Matix immediately enlisted in the Marines, Paul Matix said. Paul

Matix was later drafted in the Army and served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1971, he said. One of two sisters, Elaine, later joined the Navy. The other sister, Judy, still lives near Dayton.

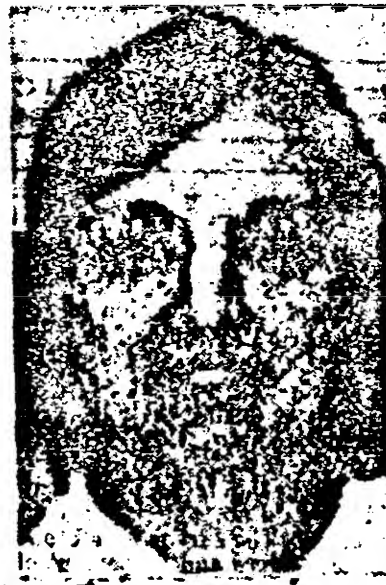
William Matix served two tours of duty with the Marines in either Guam or Okinawa, his brother said. William Matix then left the military for about six months and worked odd jobs, such as painting cars, before joining the Army, Paul Matix said.

He said his brother left the Army in the mid-1970s and enrolled in a meat-cutting school in Ohio. He later graduated from a chef school in New York, Paul said.

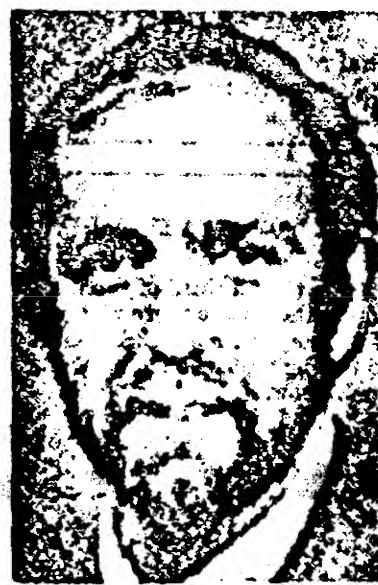
In 1976, William married Patricia Buchanich, his first wife, whom he met during his tour in the Army. They later settled near Delaware, Ohio. After her murder, William changed, Paul Matix said.

"Bill kept a lot of things to himself. Some people keep it bottled up inside," he said.

He said Platt contacted his brother after the murder and asked him to leave Ohio and work for him at a landscaping business in Miami. William Matix and Platt, best friends since they met



Patricia Matix



William R. Matix

File photos



iam R. Matix's home in southwestern Miami

AP

in Korea as military policemen, lived only blocks apart in the quiet neighborhood near where they died.

Paul Matix said Platt was a "creep" who had a bad attitude. He believes his brother's pain helped Platt lure him into some type of criminal activity.

"What the FBI is saying about Bill can't all be true. That's just not my brother," Paul Matix said.

U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III made a special visit to Miami yesterday to meet with the wounded FBI agents and praise their work.

"I just told them how grateful we were for their actions," Meese said in an Associated Press story. "I do know this was an excellent job of locating two very dangerous bank robbers."

Killed in the shootout were FBI agents Benjamin Grogan, 30, and Jerry Dove, 30. Grogan's funeral will be held in Miami tomorrow. His body will be taken to Brunswick, Ga., for burial. Dove will be returned to Charleston, W. Va., for burial.

Two wounded agents were in serious but stable condition yesterday, two others were treated at Miami hospitals and released. The fifth agent, Ed Mireles, was in good condition.

It was Mireles, wounded badly in the left arm, who crawled about 20 feet, stood up and shot at Platt and Matix as they attempted to get away in a government car.

"Somehow, Mireles got to the car — I don't know how," an investigator told the Miami Herald. "He killed them both with a revolver."

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Webster Says Slain Agent Gave 'Last Full Measure of Devotion'

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. (UPI)—FBI Director William H. Webster attending the second funeral of one of his agents in as many days, said Tuesday that Jerry Dove gave the "last full measure of devotion" in a gun battle with bank robbery suspects.

Dove, 30, one of two agents killed in a shoot-out with two armored car robbery suspects in Miami last Friday, "lived to see his childhood dream become a reality," Webster said.

"His courage and devotion to duty never wavered," Webster said of Dove. "We had a very tall man. He gave all of us his last full measure of devotion."

400 Attend Rites

Webster was among 400 people attending memorial and burial services for Dove, and he flew from Miami, where he attended services for the other dead agent, Benjamin T. Grogan, 53, on Monday.

Five other agents were wounded in the shoot-out in which two suspects were killed.

Dozens of law enforcement officials were among the mourners Tuesday. Gov. Arch A. Moore Jr.,

State Police Supt. Fred Donohoe and Atty. Gen. Charlie Brown also attended the service.

Special Agent Bob Ross, who was with Dove when he died, praised his partner of the last nine months.

"We were as close as any two agents ever were," Ross said. "At the end, Jerry was up front, where he always wanted to be. He was a front-line guy all the way."

Ross said that Dove and Grogan did not suffer when they died.

"It was very quick," he said.

Ross, a 15-year veteran of the FBI, called Dove a "throwback" to what law enforcement officers used to be.

"He had enthusiasm, desire and dedication in plenty," Ross said.

"His sense of humor was unique, he loved people and he believed in what he was doing. He was a beautiful person."

Memorial services and graveside rites were conducted by the Rev. Joe Harpold, a close friend of Dove.

"He was a fun person to be around," Harpold said later. "He sought to live life to the fullest. He wasn't afraid to set goals and go for them. He wasn't afraid to live."

The Washington Post _____

The Washington Times _____

Daily News (New York) _____

The New York Times _____

The Wall Street Journal _____

The Chicago Tribune _____

The Los Angeles Times _____

The Christian Science Monitor _____

USA Today _____

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Never forget their courage

It was the worst shooting in the long, storied history of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Two agents brutally slain by suspected bank robbers who possessed an arsenal Al Capone would have envied. Five other agents wounded. The two suspected bank robbers dead after a wild shootout busted loose in a normally quiet neighborhood off U.S. 1 near the Dixie Belle Shopping Center.

As revealing as those details are, they do not tell the whole story of what happened last Friday morning when agents Benjamin Grogan and Gerald Dove made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The real story is one of courage, of FBI agents risking and giving up their lives to protect the rest of us, and demonstrating again that when law enforcement officers work the streets nothing is routine.

The agents were prepared for trouble. They called in reinforcements before they pulled over the two suspects who were driving a stolen car that had been used in a robbery. But the agents could not be prepared for the weapons that awaited them or for the homicidal and suicidal nature of those who were primed to kill and ready to be killed.

Common sense and courage rode with the FBI agents last Friday morning, even if good luck did not. They made their move only after pursuing the suspects into a quiet neighborhood. After the shooting began, witnesses reported, the agents raised their guns several times as uninvolved motorists drove through the cross fire. The agents' assailants extended no such courtesies.

Before one of the agents finally succumbed, he kept lifting himself to fire at his assailants, a witness reported. Another agent who was seriously wounded, Ed Mireles, crawled to confront the killers as they sought to flee in one of the FBI vehicles, and Mireles fired the bullets that finally ended the battle.

Heroism on the job is not rare, but it is often unappreciated. In this instance the performances and the sacrifices of the agents should be deeply appreciated by all. It may appear to be small comfort to the families of Agents Grogan and Dove to be told what they had known all along: that the men they loved upheld the highest standards of their profession and lived up to the highest expectations of humanity. But that is a deep well from which relatives, friends and colleagues can draw support.

FBI Director William Webster said after the tragedy, "As in law enforcement everywhere, dedicated men and women put their lives on the line each day for all of us. This is a violent world, but it would be much worse without their fidelity, their bravery and their integrity." In few areas is that sentiment more appropriate than in Dade County.

Psychiatrists, psychologists and criminologists may never understand exactly what lay behind the actions of the killers. Though nameless and faceless to law enforcement agents before the shootout, the two men in the stolen car were suspected bank robbers, armored car robbers, even cold-blooded murderers. At the same time, as it turns out, they were considered to be family men. No one knows yet, however, whether they acted alone, or whether anyone who knew them suspected they lived other lives. The pieces of this bizarre puzzle may never fit right.

It remains baffling, too, why some motorists ignored warnings to steer clear of the area where the shootout, which lasted more than five minutes, was taking place. Perhaps it's the same inane and selfish reason that leads some motorists to ignore police or fire-rescue vehicles that are speeding down the highway

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with their emergency lights flashing and their sirens wailing. And the macabre curiosity that lures crowds to see and otherwise sense death is a part of mankind's makeup that runs contrary to the courage which often creates the scenes that draw the crowds.

As the community mourns for Agents Grogan and Dove, and hopes for the speedy and thorough recovery of the other wounded agents, it should also encourage the FBI and other law enforcement agencies to complete any other investigations that may relate to the activities of the dead killers.

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CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

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Gunshots Shatter Lifelong Dream

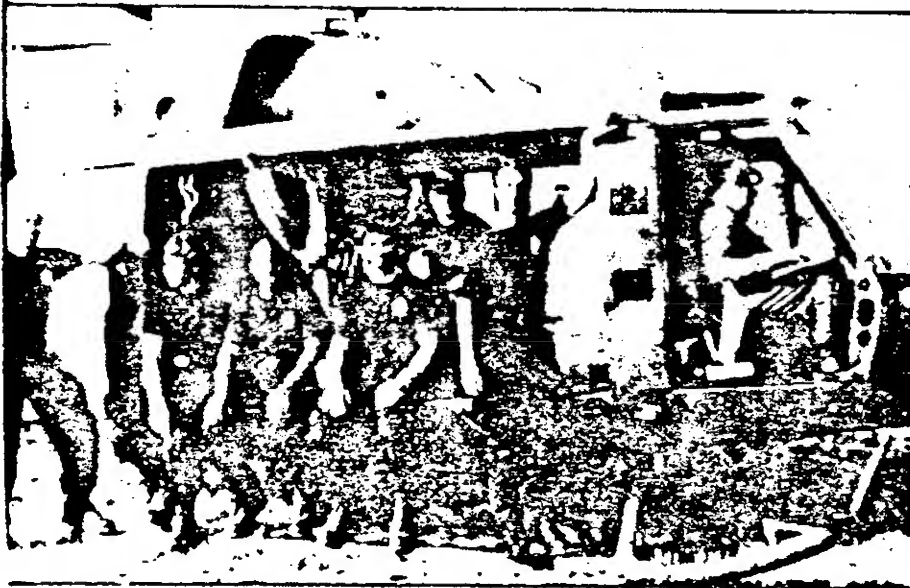
JERRY DOVE REMEMBERED — Jerry Dove, standing in center of photo at right, realized a lifelong dream when he joined the FBI in 1982. He was trained as a member of the FBI S.W.A.T. team that protected athletes during the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Below, family pictures show Dove as a grade-school student, dressed in his football uniform during his junior year at Dunbar High School, at his graduation from WVU Law School and in a portrait taken two years ago.

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Friends Remember Dedicated FBI Agent

By SARA CRICKENBERGER
Of The Daily Mail Staff

Gunshots rang out on a quiet Miami street. Soon the air was filled with the sounds of bullets piercing metal and shattering glass.

When the quiet descended again last Friday morning, four men were dead — two robbery suspects, a 25-year veteran FBI agent and 30-year-old Jerry Dove.

In places like the quiet Dunbar neighborhood where Dove grew up, scenes like that have never been real; they don't happen except on television.

But perhaps as much as any of the events in the days since Dove was killed, a two-page telegram from "Miami Vice" television series actor Don Johnson expressing his sympathy to Dove's mother drives home the fact that life is not like television. When the scene is over the players don't get up and go home.

Law enforcement is dangerous, not glamorous. Jerry Dove knew that. And it was the only thing he ever wanted to do.

"He always wanted to be in the FBI," said Dove's mother, Bobbie Dove. "That's why he went to law school, to meet some of the FBI's strict requirements."

"He was always interested in law enforcement and the FBI is the top of the line in law enforcement. That was what he wanted."

FBI Director William Webster was expected to attend 10 a.m. services today for Dove, who was killed along with his partner, Benjamin Grogan, as they tried to arrest two robbery suspects.

After graduation from Dunbar High School, Dove attended Concord College, then Marshall University, where he graduated with honors. He graduated from West Virginia University Law School, then worked in the attorney general's office until he was accepted into the FBI Academy in 1982.

He accepted his FBI commission in Pittsburgh and worked there and in Charleston and Huntington before moving to San Diego, then to Miami.

Long-time friend Larry Hatcher said Dove was goal oriented. And before he set the FBI as his goal, he had already decided to meet a more challenging one.

"He wanted to make a difference in life, to do something important before he died," Larry said. "He knew that long before he thought about the FBI."

"Jerry had a real strong sense of what was right and what was wrong. He believed in making whatever sacrifices he had to do the right thing."

And although Dove knew the risks of being an FBI agent, he didn't talk much about them, Hatcher said.

"I never had any fear that he would be killed," he said. "I think that's in part because he downplayed that side of it to me."

Dove, who was more conservative than his counterparts growing up in the '60s and '70s, was nonetheless popular among his peers, Hatcher said.

"His idea of a good time was to get together at a pizza place and just talk," Hatcher said. "He was always concerned about our personal lives, who we were dating. And he gave lots of advice, whether we wanted it or not."

His memory was astounding and his sense of humor was one of his best traits, his friends said. After seeing a movie once, Dove could recite lines and jokes from it and do impressions of the actors. Clint Eastwood movies were among his favorites.

"I'll never forget, one evening we had made plans to go to the drive-in movies to see a double feature of Clint Eastwood," Hatcher said. "I was talking to my girlfriend's parents and Jerry drives up wearing a poncho and a cap gun with a stogy in his mouth. He walked bowlegged up to the porch like Clint Eastwood in one of his movies."

Mrs. Dove also remembers a few pranks from Dove's youth.

"One Christmas, he and some friends dressed up as Wise Men and went door-to-door through the snow in their bathrobes, barefooted and wearing paper beards they had made," she said.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Slain FBI agent: 'He was noble... guardian of peace'

By Buddy Nevins

Miami Bureau Chief

As his fellow agents fought back tears and his wife sobbed, one of two FBI men slain in a bloody shootout with suspected bank robbers was eulogized Monday as a martyr in the fight against crime.

More than 1,500 people attending Agent Benjamin Grogan's funeral heard him described as a religious man who once wanted to be a priest but instead found another way to help the public — as an FBI agent.

"He was a noble, heroic, committed guardian of our peace and freedom," said Archbishop Edward A. McCarthy at the service.

Grogan and Agent Gerald Dove were gunned down Friday in a wild battle on a suburban south Dade County street as they tried to arrest two robbery suspects. Five other agents were wounded, and the two suspects were killed.

As he left the funeral, FBI Director William Webster called Grogan "brave and commendable" and said his killing should remind the public that FBI agents were "always willing to put their lives on the line."

Visitation Catholic Church in north Dade County was packed with 800 family members, friends, co-workers at the FBI and officers from other law enforcement agencies. More than 700 were unable to get into the church and stood outside, listening to the services over speakers.

Many uniformed officers, including dozens from Broward and Palm Beach counties, were openly weeping as they filed into the church. Most had black duct tape stripped across their badges.

The agent's coffin arrived at the church in a motorcade led by more than a dozen motorcycle officers. It was carried into the sanctuary by FBI agents, friends of Grogan's during his 25 years with the agency.

Grogan's mother, Alice, walks with the aid of a crutch and was supported by two family members as she took her seat at the funeral.

Tears were streaming down the face of Sandra Grogan, the agent's wife and an investigative employee with the FBI's Fort Lauderdale office, as she was helped into the church. She entered clutching a wooden crucifix and the hand of her nephew, Shawn.

Shawn, 3-year-old godson of the slain agent, appeared bewildered as he looked around the church packed with crying adults. Pinned to Shawn's double-breasted jacket was a police badge with black tape across it.

man of faith, a Christian man, a man who loved and cared and was concerned about others," said the Rev. Brendan Daulton, the agent's pastor.

U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Peter Fay said Grogan, "a true patriot," fell victim in the continuing war against "the hoods of our world."

While Fay eulogized the dead agent, Webster sat with his head bowed. After the service, he promised reporters an intensive investigation into the bloodiest day in FBI history.

Webster said agents already are digging into the backgrounds of the two suspected bank robbers.

William Matix, 34, and Michael Platt, 32, appeared to neighbors and friends to be normal family men. The FBI says they were responsible for a string of violent bank and armored car robberies and possibly three killings.

There had been some speculation that Matix and Platt might be members of a right-wing survivalist group but Webster said the FBI had turned up no evidence tying the pair to others.

"We have not yet connected them to anybody," said Webster.

"We have connected them to a number of bank robberies where lethal ruthless shootings occurred.

"Before we're through, we'll know everything about them from their birth to their deaths," he

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cize the way agents attempted to arrest Matix and Platt.

"We have some disadvantages," said Webster. "We don't fire first. We try to resolve these things peacefully. We don't jeopardize bystanders."

"This was a routine surveillance," he said. "It happened very fast."

Grogan and Dove were on surveillance south of Miami Friday morning when they spotted a stolen car that agents said was used in earlier robberies.

When they and their backup tried to arrest Matix and Platt, they were met with rapid fire from a high-powered, semi-automatic rifle.

Before Grogan's funeral, Webster visited three agents still hospitalized with wounds from Friday's gunbattle. He called Agent Edmundo Mireles "a real hero" for "continuing to return fire" although shot in the arm and forehead.

Mireles was "in pain" but "getting better" at South Miami Hospital, Webster said. The agent was reported in fair condition by the hospital.

Agents Gordon McNeill and John Hanlon were reported in stable condition in Baptist Hospital. McNeill has a chest wound, and Hanlon was shot in the thigh.

Webster told reporters he would attend services for Dove today in Charleston, W.Va.

Grogan is to be buried Wednesday in Brunswick, Ga.



AP Laserphoto

Wounded FBI agents leave hospital

John Hanlon [right] and Gordon McNeill, two of the five FBI agents wounded during a shootout April 11 south of Miami, discuss their ordeal after being released from the hospital Tuesday. Suspects William Matix and Michael Lee Platt were killed in the shootout, as were FBI agents Jerry Dove and Benjamin Grogan.

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The Washington Post _____
 The Washington Times _____
 Daily News (New York) _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Chicago Tribune *Sec. 1, pg. 4* _____
 The Los Angeles Times _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 USA Today _____

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7

AN FBI SHOOT-OUT IN MIAMI LEAVES FOUR DEAD, FIVE WOUNDED AND SOME LINGERING MYSTERIES

Crime



"We're all going back to work," says FBI agent John Marlon (seated), who shared a hospital room with agent Gordon McNeill.

I guess it was both the luckiest hunch and the unluckiest hunch I've ever had," said FBI agent Gordon McNeill, 43, when it was over. "I'm glad these two people will not cause any further injury to anyone, police officer or civilian."

McNeill's hunch was that two vicious criminals might be prowling a neighborhood south of Miami one recent Friday morning. He authorized a rolling

stakeout of eight agents in three unmarked cars. As they cruised the busy suburban streets of Sunniland, the agents were looking for a black Chevrolet Monte Carlo. The car had been stolen a month earlier by two men who had approached its owner, Jose Co-

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May 5, 1986

lazzo, while he was popping away at target practice in a remote corner of the Everglades. The men, suspected in more than a dozen armored-car hold-ups and bank robberies during the past 15 months, had shot Colazzo four times in the back and left him for dead in a shallow pond, but Colazzo had lived to describe his assailants.

At about 9:20 that Friday, McNeill's hunch paid off. Agent Benjamin Grogan, 53, spotted the car and radioed for reinforcements. The three FBI cars wheeled in to track the suspects. Soon the black car was within a block of the heavily traveled South Dixie Highway. McNeill saw a rifle barrel rise in the front seat. "They're loading up!" he radioed. Tires squealing, the agents' cars converged on the Monte Carlo, forcing it to crash into a tree. Two more FBI vehicles raced to the scene. The suspects opened fire immediately, rolling combat-style from the stolen car. One of the bloodiest—and most mysterious—shoot-outs in the 78-year history of the FBI was underway.

Grogan and his partner, agent Jerry Dove, 30, were mortally wounded by some of the first blasts from the suspects' shotgun and Ruger Mini-14 rifle, which holds a 30-round magazine. The agents fired back with a shotgun, 9-mm pistols and .38-cal. revolvers, but they were outgunned. "I got shot in the hand," says agent John Hanlon, 48. "My hand exploded, and I flopped over on my back and looked to my left and saw the guy standing by the car. Then he came around and shot me again on the ground in the groin. There was a lot of machine-gun fire, and all the casings came down on me.

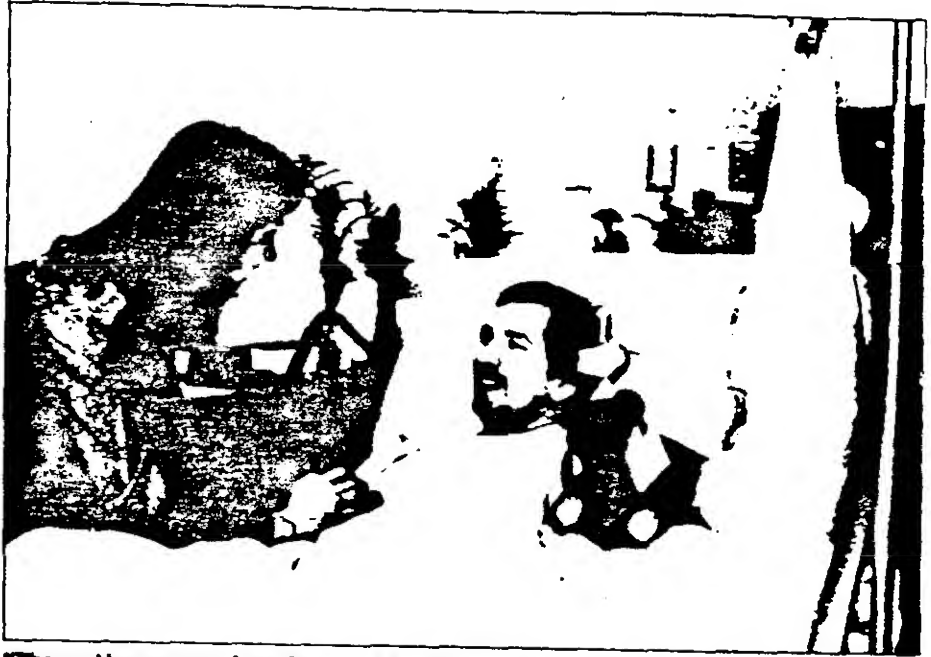
"I heard Ben go, 'Oh, my God,' but I didn't feel him fall down. Then Jerry Dove fell right next to me, his head face down. Jerry raised his head, his eyes were closed, and the guy who I think shot me, shot Jerry in the back of the head. Executed him. I could see the bullet hole in the back of his head. I was lying on the ground, and I, honest to God, I thought of my wife, my three kids. I wasn't thinking, 'I gotta see Paris,' but I wasn't ready to die. I

thought, 'I hope he doesn't put the gun against me.' I know I felt he was going to kill me."

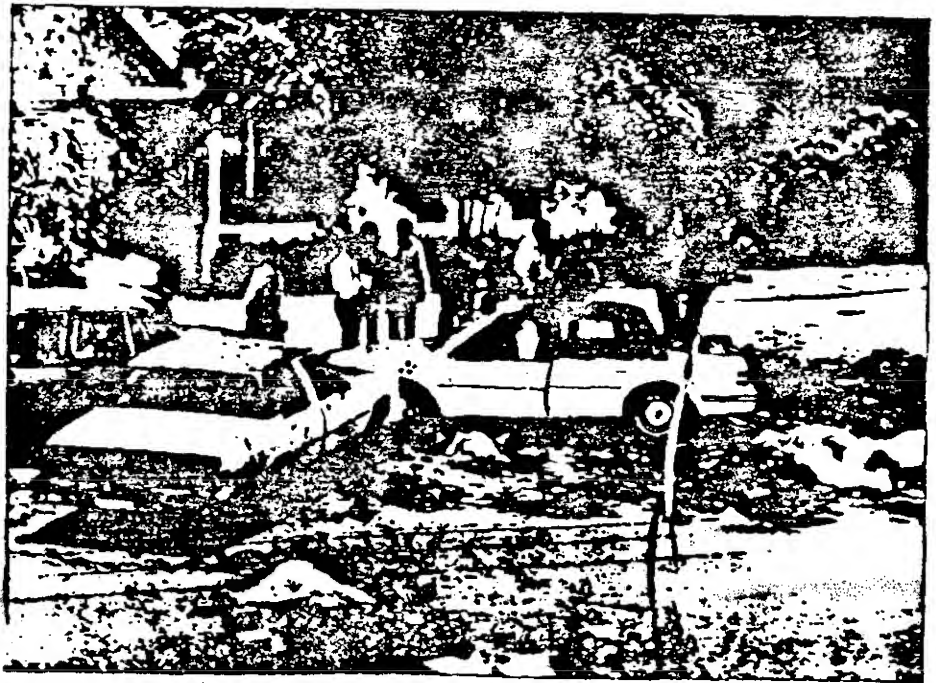
McNeill, who had emptied his revolver at the men while they were still in the Monte Carlo, also had been wounded in the hand and found it impossible to reload. He made a move around the car to grab a shotgun off the backseat. A volley from the

Ruger cut him down, one round glancing off his spine, temporarily paralyzing him.

(Meanwhile, traffic continued to roll down sunny S.W. 82nd Avenue, right through the gunfight. Some people later said they just thought *Miami Vice* was filming a TV scene. Agents would point their weapons in the air whenever a passerby wandered into their



"The real heroes are Jerry Dove and Ben Grogan," says agent Edmundo Mireles, who killed the suspects. He is comforted by wife Elizabeth, herself an FBI agent.



Gunman Michael Platt (center) lies dead after the battle. The bodies of FBI agents Dove and Grogan are covered at right.

fields of fire. An eyewitness, Robert Stebbins, remembers screaming frantically at one driver to get out of the way. "But I'm late for my tennis lesson!" she replied, and drove on.

Two other agents, Richard Manauzzi and Gilbert Orrantia, were wounded. The gunmen had gotten into the slain Grogan's FBI car and were desperately trying to get it started. Agent Edmundo Mireles, 33, his left arm shattered by a rifle bullet, managed to fire a shotgun blast at the felons before falling to the ground. In great pain, his arm hanging uselessly, he crawled to the driver's side of the car. With his last bit of strength he rose up and fired six rounds through the window, killing both criminals.

The dead gunmen were identified as Michael Platt, 32, and William R. Matix, 34, neither of whom had a criminal record. The FBI began meticulously tracing their lives, and strange facts soon emerged. The first wives of both men, for instance, had died violently. Platt's wife, Regina, had been killed in 1984 by a shotgun blast that was ruled a suicide. A year earlier Matix's wife, Patricia, and another woman had been knifed in an unsolved Columbus, Ohio murder. Matix, suspected in the crime, had subsequently become a born-again Christian, lecturing church groups about how he had turned to Jesus after the devastating loss of his wife three months after the birth of their daughter, Melissa.

Meanwhile, questions have been raised about the shoot-out. Should the agents have tried to stop the car at that moment? Are FBI weapons adequate when criminals can command such firepower? The heroism of the agents overshadowed those questions.

"The bottom line is that we didn't want those men to get on South Dixie Highway," explained Hanlon. "We knew if they got on South Dixie they would have sprayed the town, and people would have gotten hurt. They didn't get on South Dixie, so the damn thing was a success. We're sick about Ben and Jerry. But we got our two. Those men [Platt and Matix] won't hurt anybody anymore." If there was any failure, said McNeill, "the failure may be the weapon"—the standard FBI handguns. As for supplying agents with heavier firepower, an FBI spokesman said, "We cannot use automatics or high-powered weapons because of innocent bystanders. There is nothing to

indicate that our agents were inappropriately armed."

The agents were unanimous in praise for their slain colleagues. "Ben Grogan was in a class by himself," said Hanlon. "He hit it hard everyday." Once a student for the priesthood, Grogan was a graduate of Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and for a time taught Latin and biology at the Marist School in Atlanta. In 1970 he married Sandra, who works in the bureau's Fort Lauderdale office. A small, muscular man who ran marathons, the 24-year FBI veteran was eligible for retirement three years ago. When given a desk job, Grogan, at age 50, wangled his way back onto the street as head of Miami's elite SWAT team.

Jerry Dove grew up in Dunbar, W. Va., where he now lies buried. His parents divorced when he was a baby, and he was brought up an only child by his mother, Bobbie, who taught him a strong sense of morality. "It's just the way we feel," she says, pride assuaging her grief. "We don't see shades of gray. Things are right or they're wrong."

His heart set on being an FBI agent since boyhood, Dove earned a 1981 law degree at West Virginia University to improve his chances. Accepted by the bureau in 1982, he worked the 1984 Olympics with a SWAT team before he was assigned to Miami's criminal squad. "If it was his time, this would have been the way he would have wanted it," his mother says. "He was doing what he believed in. He had very strong feelings for his country—that we shouldn't live with bars on the windows, that we should not be afraid to walk the streets."

Only two days before his death, Dove, a bachelor, told his grandmother, "I've got a condo on the beach. I've got a sports car. I'm doing the job I love. I wouldn't trade with Ron Reagan. I'm the happiest man in the world." He never spoke of fear. "We always felt God was watching whatever he did," Bobbie Dove says.

The mysterious Matix wanted people to believe that he also was God-fearing, but that is harder to believe. The summer after his wife and a co-worker were knifed to death at an Ohio hospital research lab where they worked, Matix and his baby daughter moved to South Florida, where he joined his friend Platt's lawn-care business. The two had been buddies since serving in the military a decade before.

Six months after Matix's arrival, Platt reported to the police that his wife,

mother of his three children, had taken her life with a shotgun. The death was ruled a suicide.

The gruesome coincidence of their wives' deaths caught no one's attention, and the two seemingly respectable widowers led their apparently placid, suburban lives undisturbed. Platt remarried. Matix became a parishioner at Miami's Riverside Baptist Church and not long after his arrival found the woman he would marry—Christy, a 29-year-old phone company employee, whom he met at an inter-church volleyball game and wooed on a church canoe trip.

Christy didn't know much about men. Her social life centered around church activities—children's choir, Sunday school and nursery. "He seemed on the level," she recalls now. "His concern seemed to be for Melissa and creating a stable home and family."

Within weeks of their meeting, the deeply religious Christy was pregnant. Tormented by guilt, she prayed. "If there is some reason for me to get pregnant the first time I went to bed, there must be some reason. You want this child here."

At Matix's urging, she married him in May 1985, but within two weeks Matix had changed into a monster of foul and angry moods. Christy assumed that the problem was money: The lawn business with Platt had dissolved. Matix never let on that he had received about \$350,000 in insurance following his first wife's murder. He kept pressuring Christy to leave, and by the end of July she moved back in with her parents and filed for divorce. On Dec. 27 she gave birth to their son. Matix refused even to see the child, turning Christy and the baby away from his door this past Easter Sunday. "You're a bad omen!" he shouted at her. Eleven days later he was dead.

What was really going on in Matix's life was beyond Christy's direst imagining. Last Oct. 16 two armed robbers wearing ski masks attacked a Wells Fargo armored truck parked at a South Miami supermarket. They fired a shotgun and a semiautomatic weapon, severely wounding a guard, but fled without any money. On Nov. 8 two banks were robbed in the same area. On Jan. 10, as a Brink's guard was opening the back of his truck, two ski-masked gunmen approached him. Without warning, one shot him in the back with a shot-

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gun, and the other put a rifle bullet into his groin as he lay on the ground. Remarkably, the guard lived. (Police estimate that the robberies netted about \$100,000.)

The men fled in a car that they soon abandoned, getting into a white pickup truck. The FBI has traced the car they abandoned to a 25-year-old man who disappeared in October after telling his family he was going target shooting in a rock quarry. (A skeleton recently discovered near the quarry is thought to be his.) The white pickup truck showed up again. The men who shot Jose Col-lazo and stole his black Monte Carlo were driving it.

After the shoot-out, the FBI swooped down on the Matix house, less than two miles from the gunfight, and carried off guns and ammunition that Christy Matix says she never knew existed. As she packed up recently, she placed a wooden sign that read, "The Matix's" on top of a carton of stuffed animals. "I know I'm going to have to tell my son," she said, sorry that the boy might not be able to grow up with his half sister, Melissa. The shoot-out, Christy says, "answered a lot of questions for me." She's now undergoing counseling, but she has no tears for her former husband. "I cried my tears," she says, "for the FBI agents and for Bill's family."


—Written by James S. Kunen, reported by Ron LaBrecque

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SHOOTING INCIDENT
MIAMI, FLORIDA
APRIL 11, 1986

ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY
VOLUME III

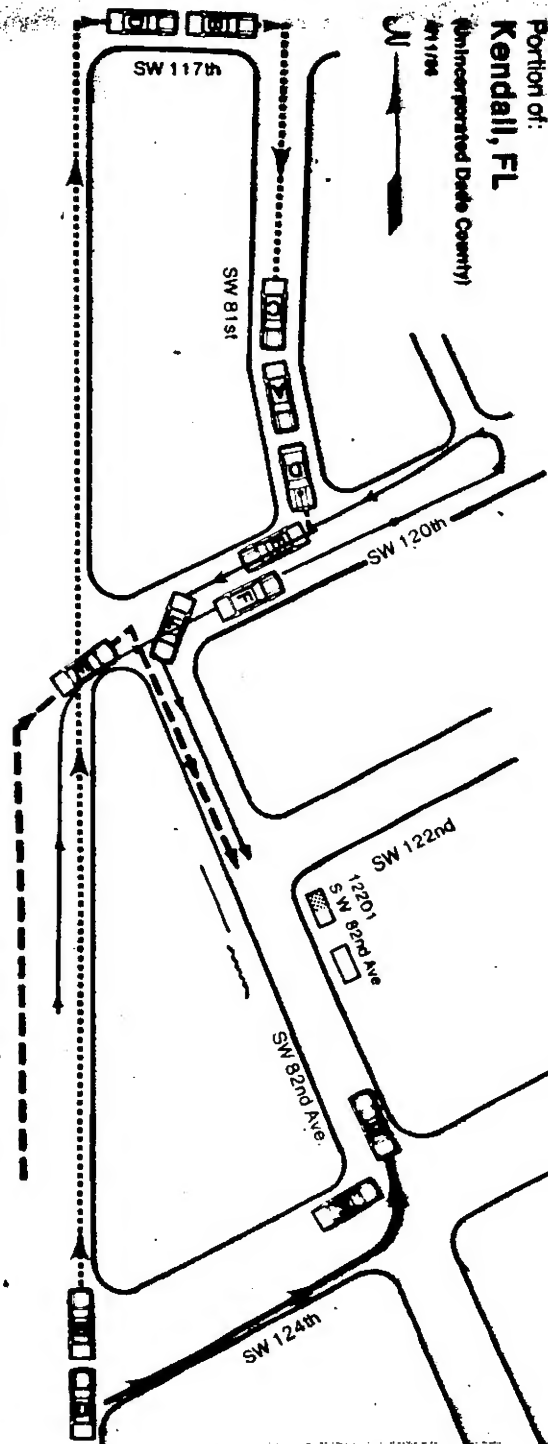


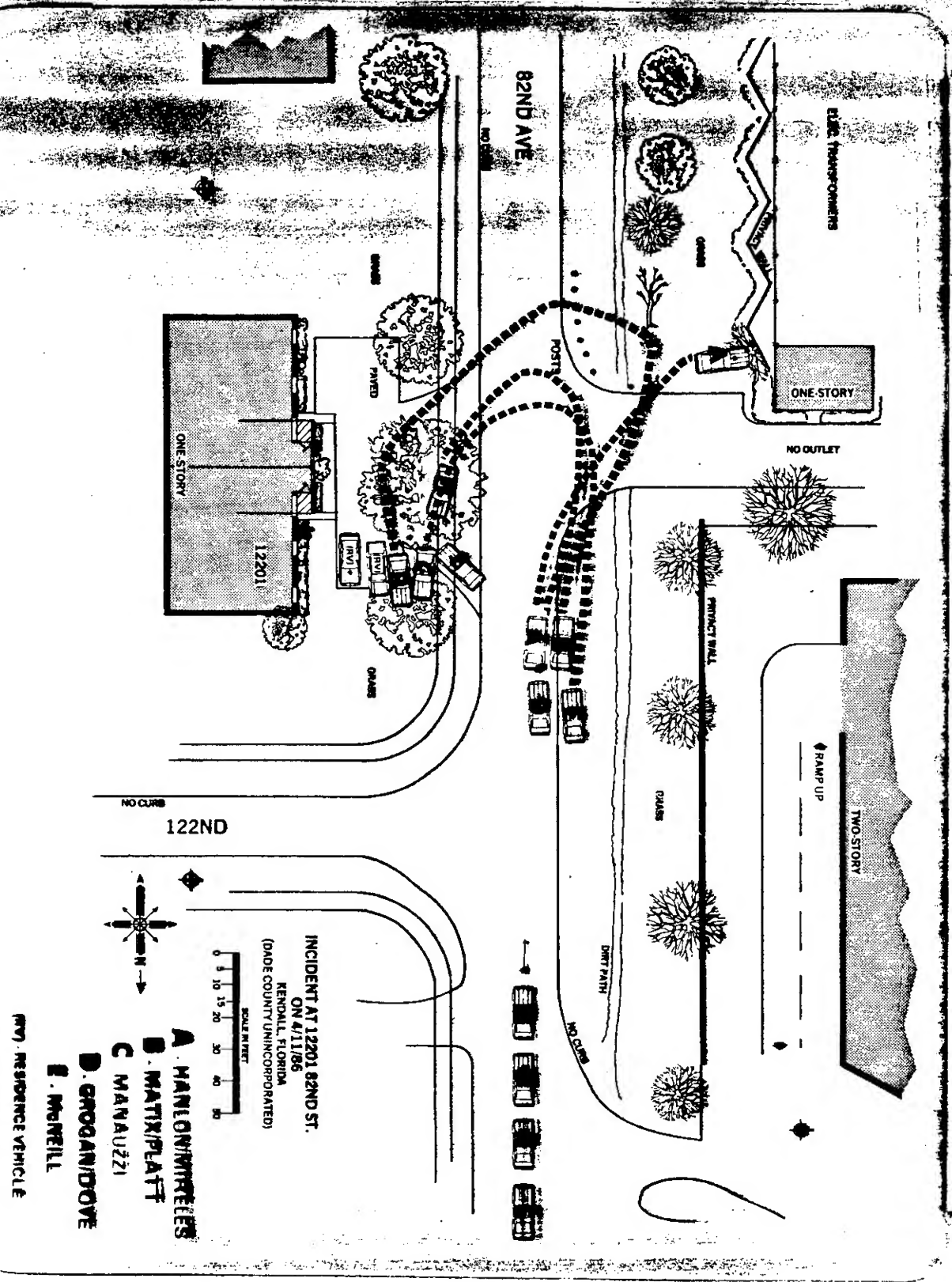
- Key**
- A - Hanlon / Mireles
 - B - Matix / Platt
 - C - Manauzzi
 - D - Grogan / Dove
 - E - Orranille / Risner
 - F - McNeill
 - G 
 - H - Green and White (Dade County)

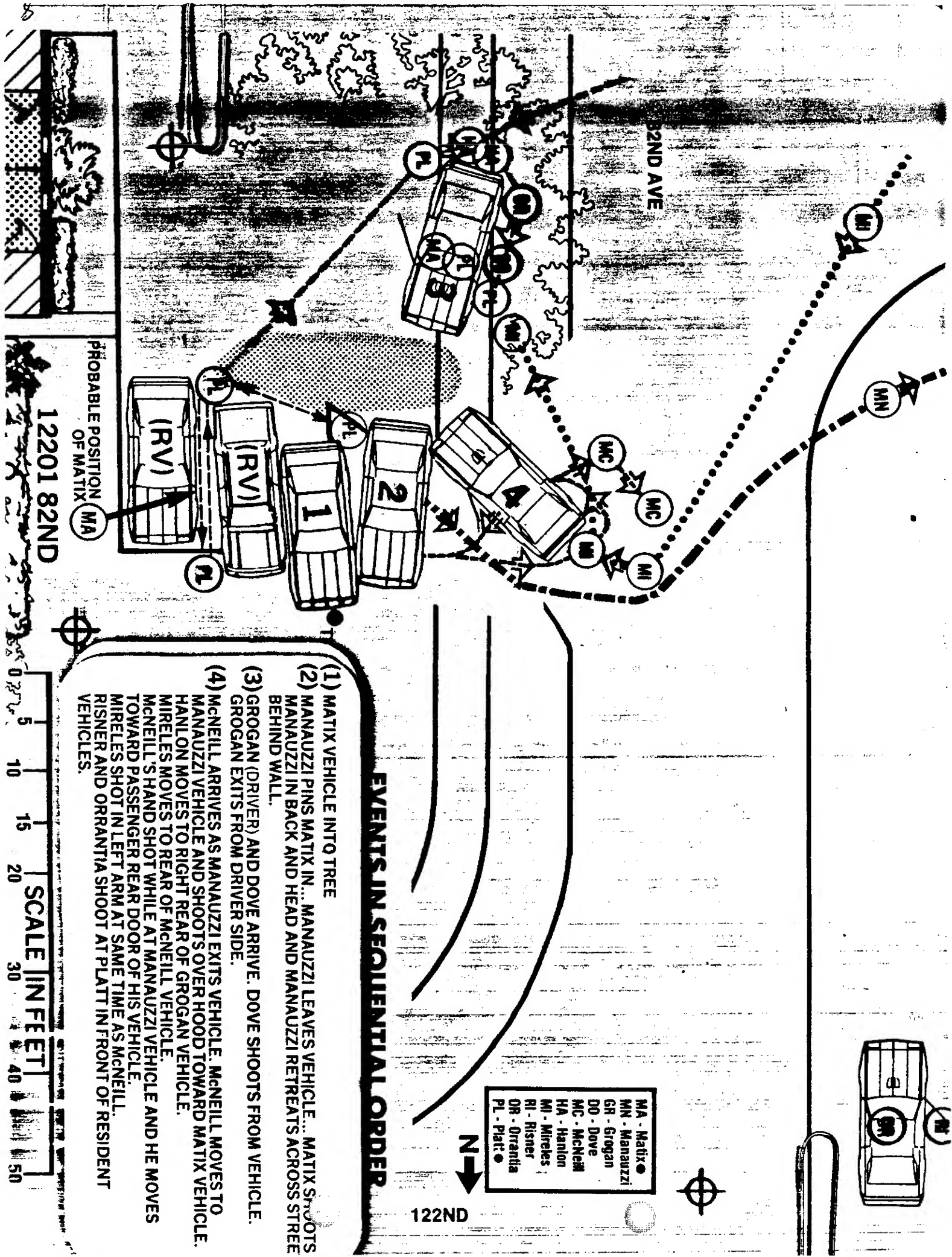
66, 67c



S Dixie Highway







82ND AVE

PROBABLE POSITION OF MATIX (MA)

12201 82ND

EVENTS IN SEQUENTIAL ORDER

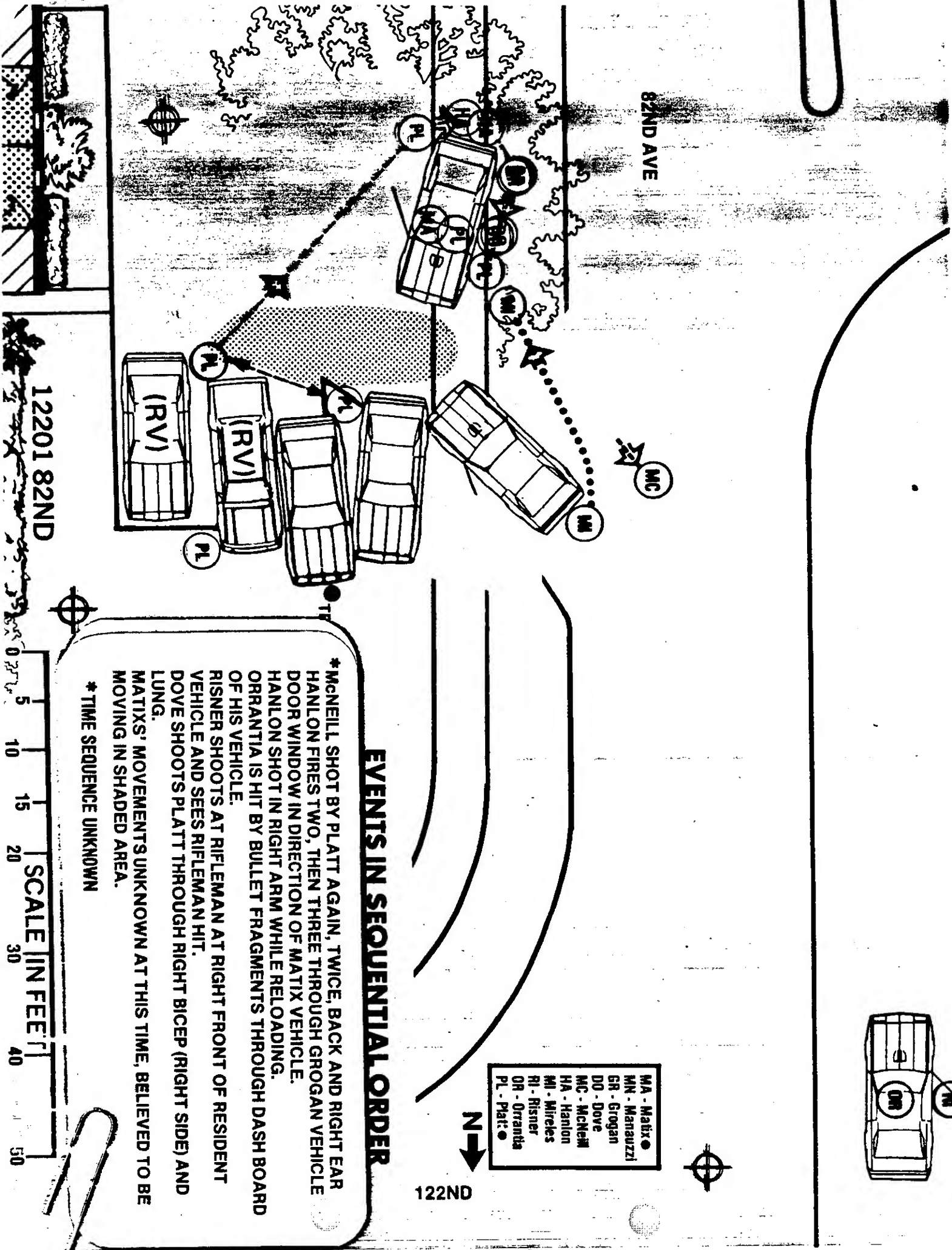
- (1) MATIX VEHICLE INTO TREE
- (2) MANAUZZI PINS MATIX IN... MANAUZZI LEAVES VEHICLE... MATIX SHOTS MANAUZZI IN BACK AND HEAD AND MANAUZZI RETREATS ACROSS STREET BEHIND WALL.
- (3) GROGAN (DRIVER) AND DOVE ARRIVE. DOVE SHOTS FROM VEHICLE. GROGAN EXITS FROM DRIVER SIDE.
- (4) MCNEILL ARRIVES AS MANAUZZI EXITS VEHICLE. MCNEILL MOVES TO MANAUZZI VEHICLE AND SHOTS OVER HOOD TOWARD MATIX VEHICLE. HANLON MOVES TO RIGHT REAR OF GROGAN VEHICLE. MIRELES MOVES TO REAR OF MCNEILL VEHICLE. MCNEILL'S HAND SHOT WHILE AT MANAUZZI VEHICLE AND HE MOVES TOWARD PASSENGER REAR DOOR OF HIS VEHICLE. MIRELES SHOT IN LEFT ARM AT SAME TIME AS MCNEILL. RISNER AND ORRANTIA SHOOT AT PLATT IN FRONT OF RESIDENT VEHICLES.

- MA - Matix ●
- MN - Manauzzi
- GR - Grogan
- DO - Dove
- MC - McNeill
- HA - Hanlon
- MI - Mireles
- RI - Risner
- OR - Orrantia
- PL - Platt ●

122ND

SCALE IN FEET

0 5 10 15 20 30 40 50



82ND AVE

122ND

- MA - Matix ●
- MN - Manauzzi
- GR - Grogan
- DO - Dove
- MC - McNeil
- HA - Hanlon
- MI - Mireles
- RI - Risner
- OR - Orrantia
- PL - Platt ●

EVENTS IN SEQUENTIAL ORDER

* MCNEILL SHOT BY PLATT AGAIN, TWICE, BACK AND RIGHT EAR
 HANLON FIRES TWO, THEN THREE THROUGH GROGAN VEHICLE
 DOOR WINDOW IN DIRECTION OF MATIX VEHICLE.
 HANLON SHOT IN RIGHT ARM WHILE RELOADING.
 ORRANTIA IS HIT BY BULLET FRAGMENTS THROUGH DASH BOARD
 OF HIS VEHICLE.
 RISNER SHOOTS AT RIFLEMAN AT RIGHT FRONT OF RESIDENT
 VEHICLE AND SEES RIFLEMAN HIT.
 DOVE SHOOTS PLATT THROUGH RIGHT BICEP (RIGHT SIDE) AND
 LUNG.
 MATIX'S MOVEMENTS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME, BELIEVED TO BE
 MOVING IN SHADED AREA.

* TIME SEQUENCE UNKNOWN

12201 82ND

SCALE IN FEET

0 5 10 15 20 30 40 50